



Going  
for  
gold

Louisa May Matthews will represent the UK in cookery at WorldSkills 2013 in Leipzig. See page 9.

Picture by Nick Linford

Monday, July 1, 2013  
www.feweek.co.uk

College's £15 million SFA 'debt'



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A message from the deputy PM



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inside...

## EFA 'loses' £20m to private providers

Chris Henwood  
@Chris\_Henwood

### FE Week Exclusive

Private training providers were overpaid around £20m last year by the Education Funding Agency (EFA),

FE Week can exclusively reveal.

Around 10 per cent of the EFA's 2011/12 budget for private sector provision for 16 to 18-year-olds was not returned, even though it wasn't delivered.

A further 15 per cent — around £25m — was handed back.

An EFA spokesperson said it allowed providers to keep a certain amount of funding for which no provision had been delivered.

But, she said, it was not true that

it had paid £20m to independent training providers "for nothing".

"In 2010/11 and 11/12 we applied a 10 per cent margin for some independent providers where they under-delivered to reflect changes to the funding system in those years. This has been reduced to 5 per cent in 2012/13," she said.

However, Shadow junior education minister Tristram Hunt called on Education Secretary Michael Gove to account for the £20m overpayment.

It comes just weeks after FE Week reported how the Department for Education (DfE) had cut its projected budget for 16 to 18 apprenticeships by £166m, in part because of "competition" from older applicants — who are funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and

Skills (BIS) rather than DfE.

"This is another worrying sign of incompetence at the DfE. In a tough economic environment we simply cannot afford to be losing money like this," said Mr Hunt.

"Every wasted pound is a pound that could have been spent on improving educational attainment for our young people. Instead, we have £20m that appears to be sitting in the bank accounts of private providers.

"Meanwhile, the government has a £166m under-spend on the young apprenticeships we need to boost our competitiveness, rebalance the economy and provide a high quality vocational pathway for the forgotten 50 per cent.

"Michael Gove needs to explain where this £20m has gone and get a grip on the chaos overwhelming his

department's finances."

Paul Warner, Association of Employment and Learning Providers director of employment and skills, said: "The period in question relates to a time when the DfE was making changes to Foundation Learning that had some acknowledged issues at the onset.

"Therefore, we were seeing in effect some transition funding to protect the provider infrastructure from a serious shock which might have left provision short for young people in some geographical areas. The margin has now been reduced."

The overpayment figures are not in the public domain, but have been seen by FE Week.

They provide a stark contrast to private training provider funding for older learners, paid for by the

Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and BIS.

The SFA makes the details of its overpayments public, but it pays private training providers strictly on delivery. Its overpayment of £91m last year therefore ended up largely in the coffers of colleges and local authorities, for example.

Kim Thorneywork, the SFA's chief executive, said the overpayment — revealed in December — meant some providers' allocations for 2012/13 would be reduced, and she expected "to deliver a balanced budget for the 2012/13 financial year".

It is not known the extent to which the EFA overpaid non-private training providers, such as colleges and local authorities, for 16 to 18 provision.

See editorial on page 4

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Edition 72

FE Week is the only newspaper dedicated to news, analysis, jobs and fun in the FE sector.

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Top #Spending Review tweets:



@matthancockmp  
Delighted the Spending Review extended Traineeships to 16-24 year olds - helping people get skills they need to get a job or Apprenticeship



@juliangravatt  
LEPs take on a £330 mil capital budget for FE in 2015-16. College capital programme modest success since 2010. Some good, completed projects



@psrolfe  
How to improve the budget. Close ineffective Unis and transfer provision to FE Colleges which are more effective and a lot more efficient!



@DeedConsulting  
In 2011-12 the non-schools part of the DfE budget was £13.5bn. Most of that was #FurtherEd. So a £2bn cut in 2015-16 is serious.



@TimRossDT  
Gove has left the Commons looking slightly glum before Osborne has even finished. No mention of childcare, or FE in the statement. Ominous.

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# £400,000 pay-off to bosses angers union

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London college bosses have been accused of “double standards” amid claims that former senior managers got pay-offs totalling more than £400,000 while other staff had been denied a pay rise.

Barnet and Southgate College gave former principal Marilyn Hawkins (pictured) £203,000 in severance and related payments following the merger with Southgate College in November 2011, the University College Union (UCU) has claimed.

She received just under half of the £409,000 pay-off pot shared by six departing senior managers, said the union, which claimed to have referred the payments to the Public Accounts Committee and the National Audit Office.

It is further claimed that the college had failed to honour a nationally-agreed pay rise for staff of 0.7 per cent — a total of £173,000, and less than Mrs Hawkins’s pay off.

Meanwhile, the union said the college’s chair of governors had ignored repeated written requests for an explanation of the senior management pay-offs following the merger.

Chris Powell, UCU London regional official, said: “While former bosses share thousands of pounds, staff are denied a measly pay rise that won’t even cover the increase in their pension contributions.

“Staff pay at the college has fallen by 20 per cent in real terms in recent years, despite



*FE Week news in brief*

## Local funding pot plan

A report published by the Treasury has revealed that £330m of FE capital is to be devolved to local enterprise partnerships by 2015/16.

Investing in Britain’s Future was published on Thursday in response to Lord Heseltine’s review to support investment and stimulate growth across local areas.

It showed that a further £170m would be allocated to the £2bn single pot of cash created in this spending found for the European Social Fund, which finances skills match funding.

## Pay deal on table

Unions are considering a final pay recommendation tabled by the Association of Colleges after months of bitter negotiations. The association said, if agreed, a 0.7 per cent increase on all salaries would be payable from August.

“This recommendation is made on the basis that both sides acknowledge that colleges continue to face major challenges arising from stringent funding conditions and its implementation will be based on affordability at each individual college,” said Emma Mason of the association.

## Business case for cash

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has announced that changing the way Unionlearn is funded will be included in a £110m saving to the ‘non-participation budget’, as part of the Spending Review.

From April 1 next year, the training arm of the Trades Union Congress will be able to bid into BIS’s Employer Ownership Fund (EOF).

A BIS spokesperson told *FE Week* the level of funding available will be determined by Unionlearn submitting a business case as part of an EOF tender.

# Apprentice starts for 16 to 18 keep falling

*Eleanor Radford*  
*@EleanorRadford*

The continual downward slide in the numbers of under-19s taking up apprenticeships is “substantial” and “worrying”, Junior Shadow Education Minister Tristram Hunt has said.

He spoke out after the latest Statistical First Release (SFR), published by the Data Service on Thursday, showed that 4,000 fewer 16 to 18-year-olds started apprenticeships from February to April this year compared with the same time last year, a 19 per cent drop.

Over the nine months leading up to April — the end of Q3 — there was a 13 per cent drop in starts overall compared with the same period in 2011/12, with a 10 per cent drop in Q1 and a 16 per cent drop in Q2.

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock told *FE Week*: “Our priority is to make apprenticeships the very best quality, rooting out any poor provision and ensuring that all apprenticeships last a minimum of a year.”

However, Mr Hunt (pictured) said: “A tightening up of quality is fine and while we are supportive of apprenticeship reviews that question rigour, that doesn’t equate to a 19 per cent fall.

“Matthew Hancock tries as valiantly as he

can but he’s clearly not getting through to the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove. This is a terrible indictment of Mr Gove’s lack of interest in those who wish to pursue a vocational future.

“While the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is pulling its weight, Mr Gove is undermining the apprenticeship brand.

“Mr Hancock needs to spell out the importance of the 16 to 18 scheme, particularly when considering there are one million young people who are NEETs.”

Overall there was a 6 per cent decline in apprenticeships starts across all ages.

Mr Hancock said traineeships would help by “preparing young people for apprenticeships and sustainable jobs”, adding: “We are also putting a stronger focus on higher and advanced level apprenticeships, with the number of people starting higher apprenticeships showing particularly strong growth.”

The fall comes amid the backdrop of a boom in the overall number of starts from 457,200 in 2010/11 to 520,600 last year.

However, the picture for under 19s was 131,700 in 2010/11 compared with 129,900 last year.

In February *FE Week* reported the first fall of under-19 apprenticeships in three years af-



# Foundation appoints first board members

*Eleanor Radford*  
*@EleanorRadford*

The Education and Training Foundation has named its first board members.

The seven men and women who will help to steer the organisation, formerly known as the FE Guild, to set professional standards across the sector, include Don Hayes MBE, chief executive of voluntary skills consortium Enable, Lynsi Hayward-Smith, head of adult learning and skills at Cambridge County Council, and John Hyde, co-founder and executive chairman of HIT (Hospitality Industry Training).

Joining them will be Chris Jeffrey, strategy and policy adviser for General Physics (UK)

Ltd Skills Training Academy, Asha Khemka OBE, principal of West Nottinghamshire College, Peter McCann, principal of Kirklees College, and Mark White, vice-chair of Stockton Riverside College.

The appointments were put forward by foundation members the Association of Colleges, the Association of Employment and Learning Providers, the Third Sector National Learning Alliance, and the Association of Adult Education and Training Organisations (HOLEX).

The board will now appoint an independent chair and up to five more specialist directors “to encompass all the independent skills, competencies and diversity needed for the board to fulfil its role”, said a spokesperson for the foundation, due to launch in August.

She added that discussions around learner representation on the board were “currently being addressed in partnership with the National Union of Students,” after the union campaigned on the issue.

David Hughes, the independent chair of the foundation’s shadow board and chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, said: “We’re building a very strong team.

“The insight and experience brought forward by this group will be invaluable as we move forward to develop the foundation’s mission and vision, and to agree the priorities and business plan for year one of the new organisation.

“Wider sector involvement of course remains key, and we are committed to continu-

ing to engage with and listen to sector colleagues when determining the foundation’s strategy and decisions.

“I am confident that the new board will continue to work well with other sector bodies and organisations.”

The foundation spokesperson said the panel of unpaid members would meet four times a year to take forward the body headed by interim chief executive Sir Geoff Hall. It has government funding of £18.8m for its first eight months.

She added: “To ensure a rotation of board members, nominated directors will serve for fixed terms and, after the first couple of years, a proportion of the nominated directors will stand down at each annual general meeting.”



The new board members from left: Don Hayes, Lynsi Hayward-Smith, John Hyde, Chris Jeffrey, Asha Khemka OBE, Peter McCann and Mark White

# Traineeships for 19 to 24 launched

*Rebecca Cooney*  
*@RebeccaKCooney*

The government is extending the traineeship programme to 19 to 24-year-olds.

Traineeships, which combine work experience placements with maths, English and employability training, are set to begin in August for 16 to 19-year-olds.

A government spokesperson has told FE Week the extension to 24-year-olds will also start in August, although further details were not included in last week’s Spending Review.

However, Chancellor George Osborne did say that the funding for apprenticeships would be “maintained in real terms” for adults over 19.

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock said: “In tough times this is a positive outcome for skills, with funding for apprenticeships protected and the extension of traineeships to those between 19 and 24.”

Funding for 16 to 19 education and apprenticeships will also be reformed to “improve value for money” and the review warned that the sector would be “expected to make efficiencies”.

At least £360m in savings will be made as part of a 6 per cent cut to the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills’ (BIS) budget.

A BIS spokesperson told FE Week that £250m of this would come from funding for participation, with £100m of this offset by a £100m increase in the budget for 24+ advanced learning loans.

He said savings would also be made by prioritising funding for higher value qualifications, through reviewing qualification and ending co-funding for level two retraining in SMEs.

The spokesperson added that apprenticeship funding reforms were not a cost-saving measure, but would “strengthen employers’ ability and incentives to raise the quality, impact and value of our joint investment in apprenticeships”.

However, analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies predicted ring-fencing of the Department for Education budget would result in a 3.8 per cent real-terms cut in FE.

Institute for Learning (IfL) chief executive, Toni Fazaeli, welcomed the extension of traineeships but said it was “worried” about cuts to provision for 19 to 24-year-olds.

Peter Roberts, chair of the 157 Group, said: “We welcome the extension of traineeships ... and are keen to engage with the proposed consultation on transferring apprenticeship funding direct to employers, but believe the focus must be on establishing meaningful strategic partnerships between colleges and employers.”

Martin Doel, chief executive at the Association of Colleges, said he was “concerned” by the BIS budget cut and called for clarity over how 180 new free schools would be funded, plus where extra money for apprenticeships would come from.

“While it is clear that Ministers have fought hard to protect education budgets in the latest funding review, the Chancellor’s announcement of a £260m cut to the FE and skills budget is disappointing news,” he said.

Chris Jones, director general of City & Guilds

Key FE announcements in the Spending Review

- Traineeships will be extended up to age 24.
- Funding for 19+ apprenticeships will be maintained in real terms.
- BIS’s budget cut 6 per cent with £360m savings from the skills budget for 2015-16.
- A consultation on reform of apprenticeship funding.
- Jobseekers allowance claimants to learn English (with costs met from additional funding to BIS beyond the settlement announced in the review).
- An enhanced role for LEPs in the skills system
- A £2bn Single Local Growth Fund will be created, rather than £70bn recommended by Lord Heseltine in March.

# Yorkshire students cleared of sex charges

Three men have been cleared of sexually assaulting a Yorkshire college student.

They were acquitted at Hull Crown Court of attacking the 18-year-old woman last September at Bishop Burton College in East Riding.

Thomas Price, 21, of Rotherham, was accused of rape and assault by penetration, Stephen Johnson, 22, of Tickton, was accused of sexual assault and assault by penetration and William Robinson, 20, of Doncaster, was accused of assault by penetration.

All three, who had won scholarships at the college, insisted they had engaged in consensual sex.

They, along with the woman, had been suspended from the college after the allegations were made.

Judge David Tremberg told them: “That’s the end of the matter and you can leave this court without a stain on your character.”

College principal Jeanette Dawson said: “The care and welfare of our students is incredibly important. We have tried, throughout this process, to do the right thing based on the information at hand and have offered all possible support in a difficult period.

“The female student was suspended from the college while the investigation was conducted by the police, but was reinstated once this was concluded.”



Editor’s comment

Money for nothing?

The EFA did not need to pay private companies £20m more than the value of their 16 to 18 delivery. They refer to ‘changes to the funding system’ as the rationale. Presumably this relates to ending the ‘entry to employment’ scheme of short employability courses, and replacing them with the larger and longer ‘foundation learning’ programmes that Ofsted recently criticised. So private providers delivering part-time courses were given an allocation boost in advance of running longer and more expensive courses.

Should the fact that many of these more expensive courses never materialised justify overpayments? To put it another way: how much of the £20m has left the sector in dividend payments to grateful company bosses?

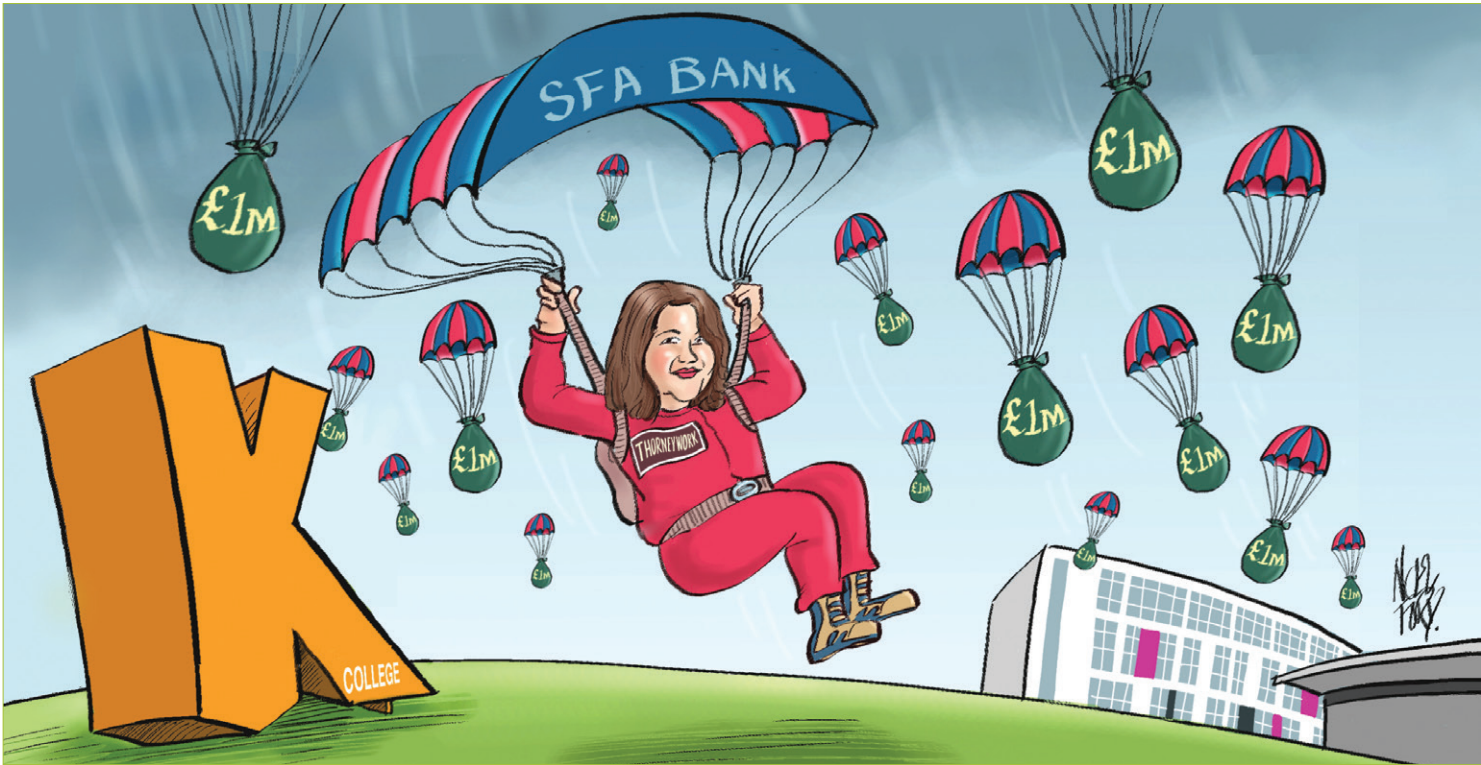
As reported in FE Week the National Audit Office is conducting a review of the EFA, so the question should be asked. Before then, the Public Accounts Committee and Education Select Committee might like to question Michael Gove.

Nick Linford, editor

Correction

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock explained in the last edition of *FE Week* that college mergers shouldn’t be taken lightly. Another thing that shouldn’t be taken lightly is the terminology employed to describe the way in which colleges might group together — be it merging or federating. And then again, there’s also collaborating. The latter form of these examples of colleges working together is currently under consideration by Middlesbrough College and Gateshead College.

However, they were both referred to as considering merger in last week’s spread entitled “Solving the Merger Mystery”. A Gateshead College official said collaboration would allow the colleges to “remain independent and maintain their local focus whilst benefitting from their combined strengths”. Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of *FE Week*? If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk) with Corrections in the subject line.



SFA parachutes £15m in to K College

Chris Henwood  
@Chris\_Henwood

A struggling Kent college that is being broken up following a “failed merger” owes the Skills Funding Agency at least £15m, *FE Week* can reveal. K College had received £3.2m in agency advances by November last year, on top of £11.7m of Invest to Save funds. The situation is revealed in confidential minutes from a college meeting in December where it says the funding gave “a total debt to the agency of £14.9m”. Principal Phil Frier said the agency’s “financial support” had allowed the college, whose agency allocation for the current academic year stands at £11.9m, to keep going as rival providers bid to take on its business. An agency spokesperson said: “It is our priority to ensure funds are available for learners, so that they remain protected and can continue their learning with no disruptions while the competition process takes place.” The break-up of provision comes after the college, which was formed after a merger between West Kent College and South Kent College in 2010, ran into debts of £6m and was issued with a notice of concern by the agency. However, the agency declined to say

whether the debts would be transferred to the winning bidder. “The competition process will run in two stages. The first stage invited expressions of interest and the second stage will invite selected organisations to submit a full tender for the future provision delivery requirements,” said its spokesperson. “The prospectus sets out the financial position in relation to the commercial liabilities attached to each of the assets. “We are not able to share any further information at this stage as this could potentially compromise the tendering process.” News of the money owed to the agency comes just weeks after chief executive Kim Thornework revealed in the annual accounts that its current academic year budget of £4bn had been managed to within 1 per cent. Mr Frier, who became K College principal in January following the resignation of Bill Fearon, said: “Obviously, K College is in the middle of a difficult period, and we are grateful to the agency for its financial support enabling the college to continue to provide teaching and support to our 13,000 students. “I am pleased to say that we have now stabilised the situation and the college will be operating a break-even budget in 2013-14. “The agency continues to run the competition for the provision of skills in

the areas that K College serves. “We understand the expressions of interest will be assessed over the coming weeks and those providers selected will progress to the invitation to tender stage in July.” Seven parts of the college are on offer: 16 to 19 provision in Dover or Folkestone, or Ashford, Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells grouped together; apprenticeship and 19+ provision in the same three areas; or Higher Education Funding Council for England directly-funded provision at Ashford and Tonbridge. Details of the sell-off were listed in a sales prospectus from the agency, Education Funding Agency and the Higher Education Funding Council for England. It listed a fixed-rate loan of £10m with maturity in 2038 and a shorter-term loan of £2.9m at the college’s Tonbridge site; a fixed-rate loan of £1.8m at its Ashford site and a fixed-rate loan of £500,000, both maturing in 2024. Fifty providers had signed up to attend open days on May 22 and 23 at two of the college’s five campuses. While the procurement was running, the agency declined to comment on the interest it had received about taking on the college provision. “We reserve the right to maintain this position throughout the process,” said the agency spokesperson.

Comment

Success rates are ‘palpable nonsense’

The only success that should count is where the learner progresses to- either further studies or sustainable employment. As it turns out, providers have been quick to exploit the loopholes in the the funding system and its bedfellow the inspection regime. By offering a proliferation of dead-end qualifications to boost achievement and hence success rates, the whole sector has been racing to the bottom, whilst portraying an ever increasing rate of success

Ofsted chief Sir Michael Wilshaw has launched a scathing attack on the FE and skills sector, branding success rates among colleges as “palpable nonsense”. He has a point, but he needs to do some fact finding before speaking out. He needs to take a look at how the BTEC system works rather than attacking individual colleges and the lecturers who have to endure the BTEC system.

Graciano de Santana Soares

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Robbie Gono

FE Week profile

Sandra Coats ~ her story

Eleanor Radford  
@EleanorRadford

Barking and Dagenham College’s catering assistant talks to FE Week

The first thing Sandra Coats tells me when we meet in the canteen at Barking and Dagenham College is that she’s “what you’d describe as ordinary”. But at the end of last year something quite extraordinary happened to this catering assistant from Romford. She received a letter from Buckingham Palace saying that she’d been nominated for a British Empire Medal in the New Year’s Honours list for her outstanding contribution at work. “I thought someone was having a laugh,” says the 58-year-old.

“I opened the letter and flicked my eyes through and said to my husband that someone was having a joke. He looked at it and said it couldn’t be — it looked real. I was delighted, but I couldn’t tell anyone until it was all official.”

Sandra has worked the college’s Chef’s Hat canteen for six years.

But she stands out, according to college principal Cathy Walsh, who put her forward for the honour because of the long hours that she puts in and the patience and attention she shows all students, especially those with disabilities.

“My start time is 7am but I’m always here at 6.20,” says straight-talking Sandra, who’s married to Robert, a heavy goods vehicle driver.

“I was doing lots of late evenings, not finishing until 8 at night. The principal recognised I was always here,” she admits. “Some of our students are in wheelchairs and can’t see over the counter, so I tell them what’s on there. Some are blind so I just help them out — carry their food. I always talk to them . . . even if I’m pushed for time. I’ll be doing the sandwiches sometimes and they’ll just come over and start chatting and I suppose I listen to them rather than pushing them away. “If I finish work late that day because I’ve spoken to them, then I finish late. I like being involved with things, people.” The mother of Stephen, 38, Trevor, 34, Matthew, 31, and Michelle, 28, had her efforts rewarded at a special ceremony at the Tower of London.

“I spent a fortune on that day but it was worth every penny,” says Essex-born Sandra, who had the help of a personal shopper to pick out an outfit for the event. With husband, Michelle and her partner by her side, she says that it was a day that she will never forget. “The Queen’s lieutenant [Sir David Brewer, Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London] read a bit out about us all and we went up one-by-one to get our award,” says Sandra. She admits that she was “a bit nervous”

because she didn’t know what to expect. “I’d never experienced anything like it. There were about 40 of us, all people who’d helped the community and those who helped with the Olympics, then we had a biscuit and a cup of tea. It was lovely,” explains Sandra. The real highlight, though, was her brush with royalty at Buckingham Palace where she was invited for a garden party in May. “We stood in rows and the Queen came down one side and Prince Philip the other. Princess Beatrice was there too,” says Sandra, who spent three hours walking around the palace gardens. “The Queen then went off to the bottom of the garden into a tent for her and the higher people with their medals. “There were juices on arrival, ice creams on little trays, a band, nice sandwiches cut into fingers, little cakes and a lovely cup of tea. “You felt important, but you knew there

“I didn’t like school, I was never very good at exams”

were more important people than you. It was all a bit of an experience. You didn’t feel out of place, they made you feel welcome and were very friendly.” In fact the magic of the day rubbed off so much that Sandra says her dream job these days would be to work at the palace. “I would love to work up there, it was all so nice,” says the grandmother-of-three. “I saw an advert for a job there and you got all your accommodation paid for: I’m too old now, but it would be nice for a younger person.” She says she likes the variety of her own job but admits there’s a lot of pressure. “It’s a circle,” she says of her typical working day. It involves putting away deliveries, cooking breakfasts — eggs, bacon, sausages and burgers — helping out on the counter and taking packed lunches to rooms. And that’s before she starts on the jacket potatoes and chips for lunch, fish for the salad bar, as well as starting preparation for the next day. “Sometimes I do four jobs rolled into one, but the principal did notice and got me in some extra help,” says Sandra. “They’re not a bad crowd, the students. You



Picture by Eleanor Radford

Sandra Coats and, right, puts sausage rolls into the oven at Barking and Dagenham College

get the odd one come through, but if there are any dramas I just phone security. We have focus children — ones who’ve left school earlier than they should have done — they can cause a bit of a stir. “They get loud and change their mind about what they want. I just ask them to move on. They’ll give you back chat but they go in the end. I don’t mind.” Sandra says that she didn’t enjoy her own education. “I didn’t like school, I was never very good at exams,” she says. “I did go to commercial college in Romford and trained to be a shorthand typist. That’s just what you did.” She went on to work at an insurance

company in Liverpool Street and then Lloyds Bank before leaving to have her children. “When the children started at school I started as a school meals assistant part-time, then full-time at a nursery in the kitchen. But it was the same every day and I don’t like just standing about, so six years ago I came here,” she says. Despite all the fuss that’s been made of her, she says she’s hasn’t changed “one bit”. “I’m up-front and I say what I think. I’m friendly but I do speak my mind and don’t let people walk all over me,” explains Sandra. She also concedes that cooking isn’t her forte. “I’ll be honest; I’m lazy when I get home,” she says. “My husband is late in too, so we normally eat takeaways or something quick.” Normally eat takeaways or something quick, “it’s just how I’ve always been,” she says. “My dad worked in a local brewery and my mum in the doctors’ surgery. They always worked and so have I — I just get on with it, plodding along day-by-day. I take whatever is thrown at me. “There are hundreds of staff here and for me to get nominated was a shock. My friends kept asking, why me? I say I don’t really know, that they should ask Cathy.”

It’s a personal thing

What’s your favourite book? Fifty Shades of Grey by EL James

What did you want to be when you were younger? A pilot

What do you do to switch off from work? Spend time with my grandchildren and family

If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be? Diana, Princess of Wales — because she did so much for working class people and charities — George Best and Gilbert O’Sullivan

What would your super power be? To magic up lots of money so my husband and I could move to a British seaside resort in Norfolk or Cornwall



# Making the case for our sector



**FE INSIDER** | *Ben Nicholls @bnichollsuk*

**Former House of Commons Education Select Committee specialist Ben Nicholls is head of policy at London's Newham College. He writes exclusively for FE Week, every month**

“We are not out to cram facts and knowledge into the girls’ heads all day long, but to help them form strong and kindly characters too,” says Miss Roberts in Second Form at St Clare’s, the fourth book in Enid Blyton’s genteel girls’-school series.

Blyton is often, sometimes justly, maligned for antiquated views, but many of her books — most particularly those inspired by educa-

tors such as A. S. Neill — contain remarkably forward-thinking elements.

The principle that education is about more than facts and knowledge will seem obvious to most colleagues in FE. Many of our students come to us because traditional, formal education didn’t provide what they needed. The very name used for our sector — learning and skills — acknowledges that great education is about preparation for life, about recognising how to learn and learning to love learning itself.

And yet increasingly the rhetoric from the government focuses on the facts and knowl- edge that we, and Miss Roberts back in 1944, know aren’t enough. Before he became Educa- tion Secretary Michael Gove was already lauding the ideas of American educator ED Hirsch, whose Core Knowledge Curriculum is so prescriptive that it specifies songs, poems and dates to be learnt in each class.

What this fails to recognise — just like the English Bacc — is that every young person is different. This isn’t, as Mr Gove might have us believe, patronising; it’s pragmatic and personalised. Furthermore, a system like that puts facts and knowledge above the “strong and kindly characters” that Blyton thought education ought to help people to develop. De- meaning and reducing the roles of citizenship, of the arts, of careers guidance, reduces the

role and the value of education itself.

However, I’ll robustly sing Mr Gove’s praises for his vision; it may be arguably wrong, but it is crystal clear. For this, I cannot help but admire him.

“Our greatest strength (and weakness) is that we are ‘everything to every person’”

I wonder, at the risk of doing myself out of a job and any accrued favour; if our sector has quite such a clear vision. A colleague suggested recently that our greatest strength (and weakness) is that we are “everything to every person”. This might allow high levels of participation and success in a range of provision, but makes it difficult to express our vision for the sector. Nor do I think we should wait for politicians — even when, as with the Labour party’s skills taskforce, they engage with educators — to articulate that vision for us. That’s our job.

The raft of policy initiatives, from trainee- ships to direct 14 to 16 recruitment, and the number of colleges not jumping on to these bandwagons because, in the words of one, “we already do them”, shows how diverse the sector is.

But unless we begin to answer some ques- tions, that diversity may not be enough. What, for example, do we really see as the role of higher education in FE? Do we want to be called polytechnics, and what does that label mean for our mission? Do we wish, in light of small A-level numbers at some colleges and the growth of many sixth forms, to continue offering traditional academic subjects at all? Yes, the new Education and Training Foundation must answer these, as must our representative bodies, but we in colleges need to know the answers ourselves.

However, we do know is the value of what we do and, unlike the Education Secretary, we have the confidence of many in doing it. Perhaps Enid Blyton trained in the FE sector . . . and perhaps she should have stood for Parliament.

*Ben Nicholls*

## FE Week Experts

# Shine your light Sir Michael, we have nothing to hide



**The chief inspector is right: success rates are not the best way to measure FE. So why doesn’t he come up with an alternative instead of beating the sector with the same old stick, says Jayne Stigger**

Inspections under the new Common Inspec- tion Framework (CIF) although rightly focused on teaching and learning, still quote success as the main judgment. Reading through Ofsted reports released this month, I found in 14 pages that they mention, on aver- age, “success rates” 18 times, “retention” and “outcomes” both four times, and “achieve- ment” six times.

If it is, as chief inspector Sir Michael

Wilshaw said last week, “palpable nonsense” to measure FE by success rates, (and I don’t disagree) why does Ofsted continue to use it as its first judgment? Measures of education need to reflect more accurately the compre- hensive mission of colleges and the diverse student population they serve.

So, what about retention? No, just keeping a learner isn’t a good enough measure of what we do. Instead of twiddling with data types, let’s make the system work.

The problem is with the system of meas- urement. We acknowledge that one size of education doesn’t suit all learners, so why should we expect one size of judgment to suit all colleges?

There are 219 general FE, 94 sixth-form, 15 landbased, three art and design and 10 spe- cialist colleges in England, all with different learners, different objectives and different outcomes. Measure us differently. If we continue to judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, we are condemning excellent teaching and learning to years of failure.

FE colleges are run as a business, so why not measure them that way in a way that is relevant to their aims — customer satisfac- tion; growing customer base; stakeholder satisfaction; employee satisfaction; and, finances.

Put this into the annual self-assessment report to Ofsted; coupled with external qual- ity reviews by peer colleges on teaching and learning. The college grade would encompass

both reports and would be timely, relevant and more reflective of the true state of FE. Any reports ringing alarm bells could war- rant a visit by the new FE commissioner and his team.

You cannot measure academic, vocational, enterprise, entrepreneurship, apprentices, training, adult and foundation learning with the same stick, something that the current

“The problem is with the system of measurement”

CIF tries to do.

Why not a financial incentive for every positive destination? As Doug Richard re- ports: “This can be most elegantly ensured by making sure that the funding of the system focuses everyone in the correct direction. In that spirit, I also recommend a redirection of funding.”

Success rates, driven by funding incentives, have played a large part in the growth of the number of qualifications and increased course success rates, but FE now works in a complex financial landscape, forced to make choices that may adversely affect students. How does this serve the poor; disadvantaged learners? Good education deserves good

funding.

Sir Michael talks of dismantling “too large” colleges; are they, rather than their success rates, the target? A number of large colleges have been downgraded yet the latest advert for an Ofsted inspector says: “You might be the vice-principal or member of the senior leadership team of a large college.” A large college? So, you can’t run a college but you can inspect them?

Size isn’t the issue, it is management and governance. Some principals have hung on to their role for years, whilst failing to improve; did Ofsted recommend they were removed? No, they left them in post. If 67 per cent are good or outstanding and 4 per cent are inadequate, then the commissioner will have to deal with fewer than two or three a year. Could Ofsted, with learners and stakeholders, make recommendations to be reviewed by an independent commissioner instead?

Large or small we are focused on our learn- ers; no matter how it is measured.

We’ve played by the rules of the organisa- tion that judges us. But before you berate FE colleges further; Sir Michael, raise your own game by looking at more varied and reliable evidence.

*Jayne Stigger, excellence and innovations manager, Basingtoke College of Technology*

## FE Week experts

# At last, a place at Oxford

**A pilot programme provides a platform for outstanding career development that will help to address the current lack of university-led research that focuses on FE, says Jonathan Backhouse**

Shortly after leaving school with two GCSEs (B and C grades), dyslexia was diagnosed. I wonder what my teachers would have thought if they had seen me at the University of Oxford in September last year, about to embark on a practitioner research programme.

These days, I work in the UK at Middles- brough College and elsewhere, Africa and the United States as an occupational safety and health practitioner and teacher. I am a gradu- ate of the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), and fellow of the Institute for Learning (IfL), the professional body for teachers and trainers in FE and skills. I hold two occupation-related diplomas: health and safety, plus environmental management. I have also completed a Master’s and have pub- lished my first book, Essential Study Skills for Health and Safety.

As a dual professional — with a dual focus on teaching, training and learning as well as on safety and health — continuing profes- sional development (CPD) ensures that I stay up to date in my vocational area, as well as with teaching and training methods.



“IfL has empowered teachers in FE to develop their own research and publication skills; and equipped them to undertake more research”

When I heard about the pilot fellowship research programme (FRP), run jointly by IfL and the research centre for Skills, Knowledge and Organisational Performance (Skope) based at the Universities of Oxford and Car- diff, I jumped at the chance.

The aims of the programme are to develop participants’ research and publication skills; provide opportunities for demonstrating significant contributions to FE; and, extend and enhance the professional status of expe- rienced and qualified IfL fellows and mem- bers holding Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills (QTLS) status.

I joined about 70 IfL members at the first workshop, where academics from Skope introduced us to research techniques and offered ideas for potential research topics. We met again in November to learn about research techniques, preparing research for publication and ways of analysing our data.

We were divided into groups of about half a dozen and a mentor was allocated to each. We embarked on our educational research.

Even though I had completed a master’s degree in 2010, I was not fully prepared for what was to come. My research and publica- tion skills developed greatly, and although I struggled to focus on the research area, my mentor and the Skope team provided guid- ance and support.

My action research project looked at the evaluation of lifting techniques in the workplace from a teaching perspective. A significant number of health and safety trainers, professionals and students seem to be unaware of the good handling technique advocated in guidance that came from a com- missioned study by the Institute of Occupa- tional Medicine.

They mistakenly believe that keeping the back straight is ‘correct’. My paper addressed this perception and advocated possible solu- tions.

By creating an opportunity for members to embark on action research projects, IfL has provided a platform for outstanding CPD options; empowered teachers in FE and skills to develop their own research and publica- tion skills; and equipped them to undertake more research. This will help to address the current lack of university-led research that focuses on FE, compared with schools and higher education.

The programme has helped me develop re- search and publication skills for future work, which, in turn, will improve my role as a health and safety practitioner and teacher. It has also helped me achieve something beyond my dreams — studying at the University of Oxford.

*Jonathan Backhouse, occupational safety and health practitioner; qualified teacher and author*

# FE faces a painful hit . . .

... and the losers will be adults with low qualifications who are taking their first steps as learners, says David Hughes in his reaction to Wednesday’s Spending Review



Wednesday’s spending announcement was a highly political holding oper- ation. It covers only one financial year (2015/16) and cuts just £11.5bn from an an- nual budget of some £745bn. But what it does is maintain the confidence of international bond markets (not unimportant) and poten- tially wrong-foots the Opposition in advance of the next election.

It’s fascinating to watch the dynamics of coalition politics, with Danny Alexander, chief secretary to the Treasury, playing ‘good cop’ by announcing capital spending plans the day after the Chancellor has been ‘bad cop’ by announcing cuts. The review was hardly ambitious in its scope, although the proposal to cap the welfare budget (an- nually managed expenditure in Whitehall- speak) was a shrewd and nakedly populist move. By ring-fencing health, international development, defence equipment and school- ing (until Year 11), it was relatively predict- able where the savings would be made.

“The size of the single local growth fund (the so-called ‘Heseltine pot’) suggests that, as is usually the case, Whitehall trumps Town Hall”

Overall, Business Secretary Vince Cable and his officials at the Department for Busi- ness, Innovation and Skills (BIS) appear to have played their hand deftly, emerging with a headline cut of 6 per cent. This is rather better than local government, for example, which faces an eye-watering 10 per cent headline cut on top of a tough settlement in the 2010 exercise. Supporters of localism were also disappointed by the decision to set the size of the single local growth fund (the so-called ‘Heseltine pot’) at just £2bn in its first year. This is right at the bottom of what was expected and suggests that, as is usually the case, Whitehall trumps Town Hall.

That said, the protection afforded to the

£5.7bn science budget within BIS’s £15.5bn settlement means that FE and higher edu- cation will take a painful hit, which will, undoubtedly, mean fewer adults learning.

It is good to see that some of our pre- Spending Review proposals, outlined in The Case for Investment in Learning for Adults, announced. These include the good news that traineeships will be extended to 19 to 24-year-olds, that spending on the National Careers Service will be protected and that spending on 19+ apprenticeships will be maintained, as will the £210m for the adult and community learning budget.

There will be a total reduction of £360m in the skills programme budget: £250m in fund- ing for participation and £110m in non-par- ticipation funding. If savings are to be made “by prioritising higher value qualifications”, this prompts a concern that the losers will be those adults with low qualifications who are taking their first steps as learners.

While it is likely that basic skills will be protected, there is a risk that the next few rungs of the ladder of achievement will be reduced. In particular, the decision to end co-funding for level two retraining in SMEs (a legacy of Train to Gain) will privilege larger employers that have the capacity to secure funding through employer owner- ship pilots, even though it is the SMEs that are seen as the real engines of growth in the economy.

One of the real surprises in the Chancel- lor’s statement came when he announced that “if claimants do not speak English, they will have to attend language courses until they do. That is a reasonable requirement in this country.” We need to know how this will be funded, but equally we need to consider the capacity and capability issues.

Overall, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is encour- aged by the government’s recognition that learning for adults is an investment in the country’s future, not only boosting skill levels but also improving employability, improving children’s performance at school and ensuring better health. The breadth of learning that the government will invest in has been maintained, even if overall numbers will reduce. NIACE will continue to make the case for that breadth as well as overall levels of investment.

*David Hughes, chief executive, NIACE*



WorldSkills

# TeamUK going for gold

Shane Mann  
@Shanermann

More than 200,000 contestants and supporters from across the world will descend on the East-Central German city of Leipzig for the WorldSkills 2013 this week.

The 42nd competition will kick off with a spectacular opening ceremony tomorrow in the city's Samsung Arena. The official ceremony will mark the start of four days of competition that will end on Saturday.

Competitors aged between 17 and 22 from 53 countries and regions will make up some of the 1,000 young people competing across 46 disciplines that range from hairdressing, cooking, refrigeration and aircraft maintenance to floristry and stonemasonry.

From Wednesday competitors will start four days of intense tasks and challenges that will be scrupulously observed by the official WorldSkills judges. They will go through every detail of the competitors' work to find those worthy of a WorldSkills 2013 medal.

FE Week spoke with Michael Godfrey, Team UK training manager for cookery and executive head chef at Eton College, shortly before he left for Leipzig. Commenting on the toughness of the challenges and the judging process, he said:

The level of performance from the competitors is incredibly high. They can miss out on a medal by a fraction of one point; it really can be that tight.

"When it comes to cooking, it's not just how the food tastes that is important. During competitor breaks, judges will be working their way through fridges to ensure that everything is labelled correctly and on the right shelf. A competitor could lose points for simply throw-



WorldSkills 2011 opening ceremony at the O2 Arena in London

ing their towel over their shoulder."

The WorldSkills Competition is the flagship event of WorldSkills International, a membership organisation of 65 countries and regions, including Malaysia, Singapore, Iran and New Zealand. The organisation now represents more than 70 per cent of the world's population and continues to grow.

Thirty-four young people make-up Team UK. Following a farewell and good luck send-off at the British Film Museum on Friday, they flew off to Leipzig on Saturday morning.

The international final is the culmination of months of intense training and selection heats. This is the second appearance in an international competition for some UK competitors,

such as Hannah Clague, who is competing in hairdressing. She achieved gold last September in EuroSkills 2012 and is a strong contender for a medal later this week.

WorldSkills is held every other year. Organisation members take turns in hosting — the 2011 competition, held over four days at ExCeL in London's Docklands, was the world's largest skills competition and careers event ever held.

In 2011, the UK came fifth in the medals table, achieving four gold, two silver, six bronze and 12 medallions of excellence. Top of the countries and regions was Korea with 13 gold, five silver, six bronze and 12 medallions of excellence.

Commenting on this year's competition, Business Secretary Vince Cable said: "When it comes to skills, Britain has world-class talent. Team UK are a good example of what our workforce can offer business and how practical learning can transform the lives of young people. "I wish them every success this week."

Shadow skills minister Gordon Marsden told FE Week: "As someone who has backed our participation in WorldSkills from the start it is great to see another fantastic team go to Leipzig to fly the flag for Team UK.

It is a great advert for the FE sector and I wish all of those involved the very best of luck."

The results of this year's competition will be announced at its closing ceremony on Sunday, July 7. FE Week will be reporting live throughout the evening from Leipzig's Samsung Arena. See our reports on feweek.co.uk



From left: Shane Mann and Chris Henwood will be reporting from Leipzig for FE Week

## Eton to Leipzig

Shane Mann  
@shanermann

For many the prospect of cooking a Sunday lunch is enough to get them in a fluster. But for Louisa May Matthews, cooking Sunday lunch for the family is a breeze when you are used to catering for more than 1,300 pupils at Eton College.

But on June 29 she will face a challenge when she flies out to Leipzig, Germany, to represent the United Kingdom in cookery at WorldSkills 2013.

Before starting work at Eton three years ago, Louisa kicked off her training at Worcester College of Technology where she studied a professional catering VRQ diploma level one, two and three.

Last Tuesday she took a brief break just before lunchtime service to give me a whistlestop tour of Eton and to chat about this week's contest. We paused to take in Eton's grandeur, standing beside a statue of founder King Henry VI between the chapel and a boarding house.

"Working in such an environment took some getting used to, but I love it," she said. "I arrived when I was 19 and in the three years I have been here, the level of support the college has given me is unquestionable.

"The whole community here has been amazing. They knew I was a competition chef when I started, and no matter what the competition, they've been there congratulating me.

"They have even allowed me to experiment on

them with some my dishes. Last week I tried out one of the competition dishes on the headmaster's wife. Fortunately the feedback was great."

She said that during the Leipzig contest, she will be assessed on eight modules. She knows six of the dishes she has to make, but the other two are a mystery "although we know one of these will be a fish dish".

Competitors do not have to go it alone to prepare for the competition. Training managers support them every step of the way Louisa is fortunate to be working alongside her training manager, Michael Godfrey, Eton's executive head chef. "Michael has been an absolute gift, he's so supportive," she said. "But he doesn't let you get away with anything. I don't know where I'd be if he hadn't been there every day to support me. I have a lot to thank him for."

She said that over the recent weeks the team had developed a strong bond. "It truly has become a team. We are always in touch with each other on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter," explained Louisa.

"On Tuesday evening, when we parade around the opening ceremony, the national anthem will be playing and everyone will have a Union Jack flying around. It will be overwhelming for all of us."

Then, as if by magic, the college's director of catering, Ian Warwick, strolled past. He was positively beaming as he explained how "very proud" everyone at Eton was of Louisa. "Representing Eton and the UK is such an amazing achievement in itself. We will all be rooting for you next week," he said.



Shane Mann interviews Louisa May Matthews at Eton College, while Daniel Linford takes a look around before a trip to Legoland (see page 20)

## Did you know?

- 1.2 tonnes of chocolate will be processed, with confectioners among those competing
- Sixteen complete beauty salons will be set up for the hairdressing contestants
- Polymechanics/automation, with 527 pieces of equipment, has the most utensils
- The florists will process about 10,000 cut flowers for their arrangements
- France has the biggest team with 46 competitors
- Fashion technology contestants will sew on nearly 1,000 buttons

### A message from the Deputy Prime Minister

Representing your country in any competition is a major accomplishment. It takes a high level of skill, dedication and commitment to compete against the best in the world.

However, unlike our top footballers and athletes, the members of Team UK have had less time to fit their training around daily commitments such as study, employment and family responsibilities. This makes their achievement in securing a place in Team UK even more remarkable.

Training managers, many of whom work for colleges and training providers throughout the UK, have supported Team UK on their WorldSkills journey. They have been responsible for developing and mentoring each competitor, ensuring that they are prepared for the four days of intense competition. The value the sector places on skills competitions in raising standards is seen throughout the WorldSkills programme.

It begins with supporting their learners as they enter the WorldSkills UK competitions, the finals of which are held at The Skills Show, to enabling Team UK to use their college's facilities to fit in additional training to prepare for the international competition. Without their support, we simply would not be able to enter WorldSkills.

It is a fantastic event that sends a strong message to young people across the world that vocational skills and qualifications should be supported, cherished and celebrated. The international competition will provide the UK with detailed insight into the most effective ways to engage young people and employers in high-level apprenticeships. This is essential for us to invest in skills and boost businesses and productivity, making the UK more competitive.

Team UK's participation at WorldSkills 2013 in Leipzig can help us to inspire more young people to be ambitious in their pursuit of skills to the highest level.

I wish all of Team UK and their training team the best of luck.

Nice Gigg

Check out NCFE's new suite of qualifications in 'Achieving Excellence in a Vocational Skill' - [www.ncfe.org.uk](http://www.ncfe.org.uk)

NCFE is passionate about designing, developing and certificating diverse, nationally recognised qualifications and awards.

Last year alone, over 400,000 UK learners from over 2,000 colleges, schools and training organisations chose NCFE as the Awarding Organisation to help them move their careers forward.

We offer qualifications in a wide range of subject areas that equip learners with the skills to secure a job and get their foot on the career ladder.

Our qualifications can be used to support:

- Study Programmes
- Traineeships
- Apprenticeships
- Foundation Learning
- Pathways to employability
- Programmes for the unemployed
- And much more...

Visit [www.ncfe.org.uk](http://www.ncfe.org.uk) and use our qualification finder to view all of the qualifications that we offer.



TeamUK competitor list

Name	Skill Name	College/Training Provider	Employer
Benjamin Tullett	Aircraft Maintenance	RAF Odiham	Royal Air Force
Matthew Quinn	Autobody Repair	Riverpark Training	Charles Hurst
Alex Knight	Automotive Technology	Honda Institute	Gatwick Honda
Katie Wright	Beauty Therapy	Cambridge Regional College	Salon at Number 5
Ashley Terron	Bricklaying	Warrington Collegiate	Peter Terron Brickwork Contracting Limited
George Callow	Cabinet Making	Chichester College Of Technology	Cimitree Furniture
Gary Greer	Car Painting	Riverpark Training	John Lennon ARC
Philip Glasgow	Carpentry	South West College Omagh	R L Scott
Benjamin Shaw	CNC Milling	South Nottingham College	The University of Nottingham
Ben Anderson	CNC Turning	Training 2000	MotorSport Advanced Development
Stephen Smith	Confectionery/Pastry	Westminster Kingsway College	No employer – full time student
Louisa May Matthews	Cooking	Worcester College of Technology	Bekynton Eton College
Matthew Crane	Electrical Installations	Bailey Engineering Academy	N.G. Bailey Building Services
Chloe Woolf	Floristry	Moulton College	Bluebell Flowers
Hannah Clague	Hairdressing	Red Edge Training Company	Reds Hair Company
Nehmaan Ahmed	IT Network Administration	Barnfield College	No employer – full time student
David Beattie	Joinery	South West College	The Green Oak Framing
Matthew Bradley	Landscape Gardening	CAFRE Greenmount Campus	Cornerstone Paving
Ewan Sewell	Landscape Gardening	Bishop Burton College	Country Gardens
Daniel Gebhard	Manufacturing Team Challenge	Bradford College	Carnaud Metalbox Engineering
Andrew Maguire	Manufacturing Team Challenge	Bradford College	Carnaud Metalbox Engineering
George Moffat	Manufacturing Team Challenge	Bradford College	Carnaud Metalbox Engineering
Andrew Craig	Mechanical Engineering CAD	Motherwell College	Clydeview Fabrications
David Cargill	Mechatronics	Northern Regional College	Schrader Electronics
James Overend	Mechatronics	Northern Regional College	Emerson Climate Technologies
Kirk Croft	Painting and Decorating	South Leicestershire College	KJK Decorators
Kenneth Wilson	Plastering and Dry Wall Systems	Belfast Metropolitan College	Wilson Plastering
Ashley Bainbridge	Plumbing & Heating	Salford City College	John Fletchers Engineers
Steven Burge	Refrigeration and Airconditioning	Eastleigh College	Cosham Refrigeration Ltd
Matt Page	Sheet Metal Technology	KMF Precision Sheet Metal Ltd.	KMF Precision Sheet Metal Ltd.
Robert Broomsgrove	Stonemasonry	Weymouth College	Wells Cathedral Stonemasons
Sarah Smithers	Visual Merchandising /Window Dressing	East Berkshire College	Alexander James Interiors
Mark Woods	Wall and Floor Tiling	South West College Omagh	Artie Mullan Tiling
Alastair Wilson	Welding	Doosan Power Systems	Doosan Power Systems



## FOLLOW FE WEEK'S COVERAGE OF WORLD SKILLS 2013

The FE Week team will be in Leipzig for WorldSkills 2013  
You can keep up with our coverage online

 You can follow our coverage on twitter @FEweek

 You can read about the competition at [feweek.co.uk](http://feweek.co.uk)

We'll be announcing the results and live tweeting from the closing ceremony 6pm to 9pm BST on Sunday, July 7



The FE Week team from left. Top row: Chris Henwood, deputy editor, Rebecca Cooney, reporter, Nick Linford, editor (with Daniel Linford, mini-mascot, on his shoulders), Victoria Boyle, administration, Jill Craven, sub editor. Bottom row: Helen Neilly, financials, Hannah Smith, sales, Daniel Duke, head designer, Eleanor Radford, senior reporter, Shane Mann, director of operations



# Thank you from the FE Week team

It seems like only yesterday that *FE Week* was preparing for its second academic year.

The first edition of 2012/13 (number 37) was dated Monday, September 10, and it covered Skills Funding Agency research on the front and inside featured the appointment of Skills Minister Matthew Hancock — who took over from John Hayes.

And with this last edition for 2012/13 (number 72), we call time on print production of the main paper until the next academic year.

The stories have come thick and fast over the year, with high points for the sector including colleges being able to offer their services to full time 14 to 16-year-olds and Walsall College achieving the first outstanding grade for a general FE college, under Ofsted's new common inspection framework.

But it's our duty to also report the rough with the smooth, so readers will have learned of shock inadequate Ofsted gradings for City of Liverpool College and City College Coventry, and calls for action over training provider Elmfield's poor success rates.

So a busy and exciting year for *FE Week* reporters, and for readers nervous about facing the forthcoming weeks without their weekly printed dose, there's good news — two supplements are coming out this month, and we remain just a mouse-click away because our website will be updated regularly over the summer.

Nevertheless, pop September 9 down in your diary as the date of our print return.

Until then, thank you for reading and, hopefully, your continued support.

*Nick Linford, editor (not always lying down, see right)*



# Supplementing with added value

As if the newspaper wasn't enough, regularly the *FE Week* team produces supplements that, so far, have covered FE loans, Adult Learners' Week and sector conferences to name but a few.

They've given added weight and value to the newspaper reporting, featuring ministerial and sectoral contributions along with news and analysis.

Every one we've produced over the last year has been 16 pages long — that's 192 pages of content on top of the education, analysis, jobs and fun readers of *FE Week* get every seven days (during term time).

More are in the pipeline and in the coming weeks subscribers can expect a WorldSkills supplement, sponsored by NCFE, to be landing on their doormats (and available for download at [www.feweek.co.uk](http://www.feweek.co.uk)) followed soon after by one on traineeships, sponsored by OCR.



# FE Week team highlights

Packing up *FE Week*'s Greenwich HQ and transporting it 134 miles north to a purpose-built replica of the office at the NEC, in Birmingham, was a highlight not only for the team, but also the many visitors who came over to say hello during November's Skills Show (pictured right).

Another highlight came the following week with the editorial team basing itself in Birmingham's Hyatt hotel for coverage of the Association of Colleges' annual conference.

There were also trips abroad — to Belgium in October to write about EuroSkills (inset top, with David Way, head of apprenticeships at NAS) and then to India (inset) four months later to report on more than 30 colleges setting up AoC in India.

But as the year drew to a close a great highlight was the entire *FE Week* team attending a gala dinner at the Association of Employment and Learning Providers' conference (pictured above).



# Cartoon appearance

Reader comments, 'top tweets', featured campus-round up articles, corrections and by no means least, an editor's comment — all new additions to the *FE Week* circa the 2012/13 academic year.

Meanwhile, *FE Week*'s Greenwich HQ has seen some staff changes, expansion and, for the techies among you, a powerful new server that sends the newspaper's lovingly crafted and thoroughly researched articles out across the WWW.

But we're particularly proud of the addition that now features on page four of the newspaper.

The cartoon has proved a popular new item for the newspaper with its 'victims' showing themselves to be truly good sports. Among them have been Skills Minister Matthew Hancock (pictured far right), City & Guilds director general Chris Jones, Association of Employment and Learning Providers chief executive Graham Hoyle, Middlesbrough College principal and Principals Professional Council chair Mike Hopkins and NUS president-elect Toni Pearce (pictured top).

Dr Susan Pember even had our cartoon about her retirement from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills feature on a cake at her leaving do (pictured right).

But who knows what changes might be in place when we return? We've got a few ideas for a bigger, brighter newspaper, but we'd like to hear your ideas, too. Email [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk) to tell us what you'd like to see us doing next year.





# FE Week campus round-up

 sponsored by **empra**™

 Basingstoke College of Technology textiles in fashion student Katrina Jayne Blyth, 21. *Pic: Sean Dillow, It's Your Day Ltd*

## Future style gurus show their work

The world of fashion and art came together for an end-of-year show at Basingstoke College of Technology (BCoT).

Months of hard work and preparation culminated in a catwalk show featuring a range of designs by learners graduating from the BA (Hons) textiles for fashion programme, with BTec level three extended diploma in fashion and clothing and BTec level three 90-credit diploma in fashion and clothing.

The work on show included weave, knit and

printed fabrics, transformed into some daring and extravagant designs.

Natalie Jameson, programme manager in the creative arts and technologies department said: "Every year, learners work incredibly hard to produce their final pieces that reflect what they have learnt during their time here at BCoT.

"The whole team are incredibly proud of the journey they have all taken to reach their full potential."

## Mother and daughter open bridal store



Dee Evans and Rosie Oliver-Evans with Mark Pawsey MP, who opened their bridalwear business in Rugby

A mother and daughter duo in the Midlands have married up business and learning interests by opening a store together.

Warwickshire College enterprise and entrepreneurship diploma students Dee Evans and Rosie Oliver-Evans opened The Dress Shop, a bridalwear business in Rugby, with the help of a £3,000 grant from Rugby First and Rugby Borough Council.

Dee said: "We're extremely passionate and excited about this venture.

"Following my own wedding, I wanted to be able to provide other brides with high quality, beautiful wedding dresses at a reasonable cost. Rosie saw a further opportunity to include inexpensive, quality bridesmaid and prom dresses so together we developed The Dress Shop."

Julie Taylor, director for enterprise and entrepreneurship at Warwickshire College, said: "This is a fantastic success story for Dee and Rosie."

**Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?**

Send your stories with pictures to [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk) including names, ages and course of students where applicable

## The right mix in the Midlands



Rashpal Sumner, executive group chef at Five Rivers, with Walsall College catering students Dale Gavin, 19, from Bloxwich, and Georgina Growcott, 18, from Wolverhampton

College chiefs have persuaded a number of five-star restaurants to take on Walsall College learners to work alongside professional chefs across the West Midlands.

Meanwhile, chefs from Five Rivers A La Carte, in Walsall; Jamie's Italian, in Birmingham; Fairlawns Hotel and Spa, Walsall; and, Simpsons, in Birmingham; all visited the college's Jerome's Restaurant to deliver master classes and share their skills and expertise.

Steve Biggs, trainer assessor in hospitality and catering, said: "The master classes

gave students the opportunity to learn new techniques from professionals, but in turn the chefs were so impressed with the students' enthusiasm and their ability to pick up knowledge quickly that they had no hesitation in offering them work placements."

Rashpal Sumner, executive group chef at Five Rivers, said: "The college's great set-up for training the next generation of chefs, with state-of-the-art kitchens and industry-experienced lecturers, will ensure the Midlands' restaurant sector continues to thrive."



The Princess Royal presents Chris Morgan with his award

## Royal medal for Stourbridge student

Chris Morgan, a 30-year-old Stourbridge College Foundation Learning student, has been recognised for his classroom achievements by the Worshipful Company of Environmental Cleaners.

The Princess Royal presented the award — which forms part of the annual City & Guilds Prince Philip medal ceremony — to Chris, from Halesowen, near Birmingham, for producing exceptional work on his horticulture course while undergoing

treatment for leukaemia.

Lynn Glazzard, director at the Centre of Excellence for Foundation Learning at Stourbridge, said: "This was a wonderful achievement for Chris, and a marvellous opportunity for him and his family to attend the awards ceremony at Buckingham Palace."

She added: "Chris's conservation project allowed him to try new skills and we are all thrilled at the recognition he has received for his hard work."

# Leon's going to be rocking all over the world

**A 34-year-old music technician's dreams have come true as he joins the Status Quo line-up. Chris Henwood reports**

Status Quo, the legendary rockers who have racked up 60 UK hits over nearly half a century, have turned to FE to find someone to bang their drums.

City and Islington College music technician Leon Cave has been named as the band's new man with the sticks — or, as a band spokesperson said, "the new addition to Quo's engine room".

The 34-year-old multi-instrumentalist, who began working at the college in 2005, plays guitar, bass and drums, and has previously performed with the Beautiful South and the Francis Rossi band.

He has also played with Macara, Zen Baseballbat, Texas Chainsaw Orchestra, Hudson Swann and Carnival Messiah.

He said: "I have really persevered over the years to make it as a musician. Despite my age I never gave up, never lost my passion, and always kept believing that I would be able to be in the position that I am now."

Leon also has worked with producers who have worked on records for Fat Boy Slim, Manic Street Preachers and Jamiroquai. They include Gregg Jackman (Seal, Prince), Bruce Wood (Nightmares on Wax), Charlie Russell (Athlete Jamiroquai), Howard Gray (Apollo 440, The Manic Street Preachers), John Fortis (Razorlight, Noisettes, Paulo

★TOP OF THE FE POPS

1. Guild Me Up Buttercup — *The [Education and Training] Foundations*
2. YSFA — *Village People*
3. When Will I AoC You Again? — *The Three [Foundation] Degrees*
4. Subcontractor Homesick Blues — *Bob Dylan*
5. I'm too FE — *Ofsted Fred*

Nutini), Cutfather & Joe (Jamelia, The Wanted), Lee Smith (The Cribbs, Submotion Orchestra, Fat Boy Slim) and The Futz Butler (Audi, Coca Cola, Moonpig).

Leon first began drumming at 4, which was when his dad noticed that he had natural talent and could learn fast.

Now highly experienced, he plays more than 100 shows each year, including large pop gigs, radio performances, corporate functions and open air festivals.

Leon arrived in London from his native Cheshire in 2005 with £1,000 in his pocket and took a number of temporary jobs while gigging as much as he could across the capital.

After a year of temping he chanced upon a music lecturer from City and Islington College who encouraged him to apply for a job at the college as a music technician.

He has worked there since, preparing students for rehearsals and big events. Learners also shadow him to find out about the technical side of music production and performance.

He said: "It's been rewarding working with


 City and Islington College music technician Leon Cave is Status Quo's new drummer and inset: Status Quo, playing live in 2010. *Pic: Andrew King*

such talented students for the past eight years.

"By the time students finish their music courses at the college, they are more mature, more professional and their talents have been honed so that they are ready to begin working in the music industry."

Leon debuted with Quo on May 25 in

Frankfurt, Germany, at the start of their European tour. He replaces Matthew Letley, whose 13-year stint with the band ended with shows this year in Australia, New Zealand, Australia and Mexico.

Leon said he plans to keep working on his own material and hopes to one day record a solo album.

*Do you have any super talented staff who've mixed it with the great and the good (or perhaps arguably the not so good) at your college or training provider? Let us know by emailing [news@feweek.co.uk](mailto:news@feweek.co.uk)*

## BMET opens specialist academy


 Birmingham Metropolitan College principal Dame Christine Braddock signs up to the city's new new Professional Services Academy. *Pic: Daniel Graves*

A college in the Midlands is opening a purpose-built specialist academy with a curriculum focused on law, finance, accounting, banking and insurance.

Birmingham Metropolitan College (BMET) has started recruiting for its Professional Services Academy, with courses getting underway in September.

A number of city businesses have signed up to offer internships, mentoring by senior staff, workshop sessions, and 'guru' lectures.

Principal Dame Christine Braddock said the

professional services sector could lose out as other sectors stepped up recruitment.

"We've seen in recent years that sectors — engineering, creative, health and digital come immediately to mind — have strengthened their response to recruitment challenges," she said.

"At the same time, I thought many local youngsters were missing out on stimulating and well-paid jobs in professional services because they wrongly believed that it was a sector that welcomed only graduates."

## Danielle gets ready to have a ball

A keen sportswoman from a Cheshire college has been selected to play for England in the Women's Rugby League World Cup next month.

Danielle Bound, from Longford and a student at Warrington Collegiate, said she was "overwhelmed" with the news that she will play for her country at Headingley Stadium against stiff competition from Australia, France and three-time winners New Zealand.

"It's a great honour," said the 19-year-old who has played rugby seriously since she was 6.

"I've been with the England squad for over a year now, but this is definitely the high point of my international career."

Alison Gallacher, lecturer in sport at Warrington Collegiate and Danielle's personal tutor said: "I'm delighted with Danielle's success. She is a really talented sportswoman who has juggled playing rugby at an elite level with her studies."



Danielle Bound is heading to the Women's Rugby League World Cup



# FE Week campus round-up

sponsored by **empra**



Eastleigh College's Revamp team, from left: Catherine Sachdev, Karina Diaz and Amy Taylor with tutor Nina Cann

## Business award for young entrepreneurs

Hampshire students were banking on their idea for a customised clothing to win a business award — and an iPod each.

And the team of Eastleigh College business and enterprise students won the Barclays Built for Business competition in which they pitched a business idea, working within a budget of £10,000.

Their idea was Revamp, a customising business for clothing and accessories.

The team was made up of 17-year-olds

Catherine Sachdev, from Botley, and Karina Diaz, from Hedge End, and 19-year-old Amy Taylor, from Brambridge.

“All the other contestants told us what a good idea it was and that we should start up the business,” said Amy.

The team, with nine others, pitched their ideas to Ashok Vaswani, chief executive of Barclays Retail and Business Banking, and Sajid Javid MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury.

## Cheshire sports day ‘all in a day’s work’



Students and tutors join in the fun at South Cheshire College's entry level sports day

Relay racing, tug-of-war, cricket and benchmark — it was all in a day’s work for Cheshire students.

Around 40 entry level learners teamed up to take part in South Cheshire College’s annual sports day on its multi-use games area.

It was organised and supervised by students on the sport and active leisure BTec level one diploma course, under the guidance of sports lecturer Rob Pickersgill.

Students were split into four teams and went

head-to-head in a host of sports, with the red team emerging victorious.

Jacqui Gregory, head of curriculum for entry level, which target students with learning difficulties and disabilities, said: “Our students thoroughly enjoyed the day and the opportunity to take part in some fun activities.

“We are very grateful to the entry level staff, learner mentors and sport and sports massage therapy students who supported the event and helped to make it such a great success.”

Want your college or training provider to appear on these pages?

Send your stories with pictures to news@feweek.co.uk including names, ages and course of students where applicable

## Bright future for Cronton college dancers



Cronton Sixth Form College dance students Sophie Hind and George Cartwright perform in The Immortal Swan

Two Cheshire dancers came in for life-changing news after bringing the house down with performances in The Immortal Swan.

Cronton Sixth Form College 18-year-olds Sophie Hind and George Cartwright were both offered places at Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (Lipa) after its head of dance Sarah E Baker saw the show.

George received a letter with an offer for a dance degree and Sophie was told she had been offered a full scholarship.

Sophie said: “Being part of the Professional Dance Programme [PDP] at Cronton has given me amazing training and opportunities.

“All my teachers have helped me achieve my goal of gaining a place at Lipa.”

Steven Musa, PDP programme leader, said: “The PDP is a unique and intensive practical course developed for both creative and technical dancers who hold the relevant performance skills for today’s dance industry, leading to training at a university, conservatoire or vocational dance schools.”

## Top note coaching for young singers



David Jarrett, Jade Adams, Ben Brooker, all 19, with coach Jai Ramage

A voice coach broke from her busy schedule warming up the vocal cords of tomorrow’s stars to train young singers in Kent.

Jai Ramage, vocal coach on The Voice, spent two days refining the talents of students at MidKent College.

Jai, who has also starred in a number of major West End musicals, taught students exercises to help to control breathing and to correct potential vocal faults.

“Young people who are just starting out do not normally have access to this kind of knowledge,” she said, conceding that she only learned the techniques in her early 30s.

“It would have helped me a great deal if I’d known them from the beginning.”

Musical theatre student Martin Fearon, 21, said: “I feel like I’ve definitely improved as a singer, even though she was only with us for two days. All of us on the course have raised our game as a result.”



Buxton and Leek College finished 10th in the Junior Leaders' Naval Field Gun Challenge

## Up there with the big guns

Students at a Staffordshire College finished in the top 10 of an artillery competition for the fourth year in a row.

A team from Buxton and Leek College took part in the Junior Leaders’ Naval Field Gun Challenge at naval base HMS Collingwood in Fareham, Hampshire.

In the competition teams raced to assemble an antique field gun, running with it, disassembling and reassembling it to get around a course, before dragging the gun home.

The 21 uniformed public services and sports BTec extended diploma students battled 15 other teams completing the challenge in 1min 31.35sec, to secure them 10th place.

Richard Robinson, lecturer on the course, said: “I’m immensely proud of all the students . . . many were well out of their comfort zone, especially having lost one of their crew members through injury. But they all pulled together to perform commendably on competition day.”



From left: Jack Ordridge, 18, Waqar Ahmen, 21, Deeq Sharif, 18, and Kane Sadler, 17

## Students step up to the crease

Learners from South and City College Birmingham are offering their building skills and services to local cricket clubs.

The college and the Warwickshire Cricket Board, which is based at Edgbaston Stadium, have agreed a partnership through the ECB NatWest Cricket Force Programme that will allow construction students to gain work experience, while giving a helping hand to cash-strapped community cricket clubs.

Ed McCabe, the board’s development

manager, said: “This partnership is the first of its kind in Birmingham but I think it will be mutually beneficial . . . Some small cricket clubs find it hard to raise the funds for expensive renovations.”

Mike Hopkins, the college principal, said: “We understand that employers are looking to hire people with experience under their belts, and we know the importance of getting our students great work experience to help them to get jobs when they leave college.”

## Stoke-on-Trent celebrates success



Student of the year Manisha Khan shows off her award after the annual celebration

Emotions ran high at an annual celebratory evening as students from Stoke-on-Trent College were recognised for their achievements.

The learners, their families and special guests heard tales of triumph during the college’s annual Celebrating Success evening, held at the Kings Hall in Stoke on June 20.

Major winners included first-year interactive media student Rhona-Anne Breeze, 18, who

got the innovation and creativity award, and student of the Year Manisha Khan, 18.

Manisha, who is deaf, is a second-year childcare and education student who has gone from a level one qualification through to level three and has already been accepted for a degree at Staffordshire University. She said: “I feel very proud that my determination and hard work has led to this award.”

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For an informal discussion about this role, please call Maria Thompson, Principal on 01708 455011 ext. 2818.

The College is an equal opportunities employer and positively encourages applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marital status, or pregnancy and maternity.



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**Closing date: 7th July 2013 | Assessment/Interview Days: 10th & 11th July 2013**

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Should you wish to apply for this post, you will need to complete the application pack, which consists of; a letter of two sides relating to your suitability for the post, a C.V. and the completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring form, which should be submitted either electronically to [recruitment@west-cheshire.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@west-cheshire.ac.uk), or by post to HR & Development, Service & Creative Industries Campus, West Cheshire College, Off Sutton Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 7BF.



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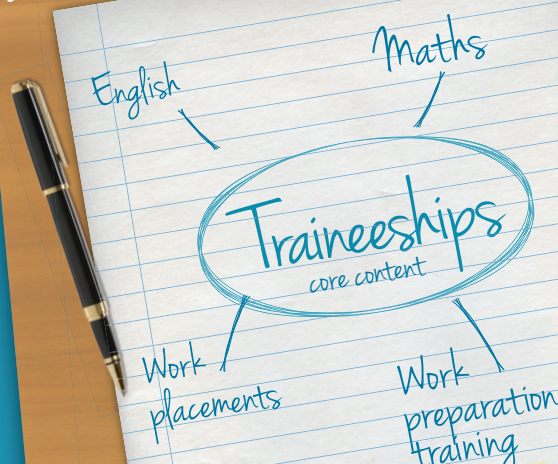


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## A GUIDE TO TRAINEESHIPS

A GUIDE TO  
TRAINEESHIPS  
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FE Week's guide to  
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